

Alec Giffen, Chair
Governor's Task force on Wind Power
Augusta ME 04333-
January 7, 2008

Dear Alec,

I write to you in your capacity as chair of the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power, to ask that you undertake some such process as that recommended by my Muskie School colleague Sam Merrill in yesterday's Maine Sunday Telegram,¹ and identify those sites that will meet the economic requirements of wind power development, achieve the state's established goals for wind power, and minimally impact the unique value set that Maine's Unorganized Territory affords.

As you know, I chair the Governor's Council on Maine Quality of Place, which recently released its first report to Governor John Baldacci.² In essence, the Governor's Council has found that keeping and attracting skilled people are the *keys* to Maine's economic future; and that Maine's advantage in this competition is our distinctive Quality of Place:

"This Quality of Place is Maine's competitive economic advantage today and in the decades ahead. We must learn to think of it as the basic infrastructure of Maine's future prosperity – much as our highways and bridges are among today's basic infrastructure, requiring continuing maintenance and investment if its value is not to be lost to our own and to future generations."

A new report about to be released by the Maine Technology Institute strongly reinforces this finding and conclusion.³

In this context, the Council has found that Maine's Unorganized Territory is "a magnificent heritage of inestimable value (that) today faces challenges of historic proportion. These include changing ownerships and expectations of near-term return on investment, increasing numbers and scale of subdivisions, and development proposals of entirely new kind and character ..."

As you go about the work of the Task Force, I urge you to be attentive to the fundamental role the Unorganized Territory plays in Maine's Quality of Place; and that you take the necessary time, and exercise the utmost care to protect and preserve the extraordinary array of values it represents. There is *nothing* else I know of like it, anywhere on this planet.

I am a strong supporter of diversifying the state and nation's energy mix, and of wind power in Maine, in particular. Still, I believe this cannot and must not come at any unneeded expense to the largely unbroken forest and remote character of the Unorganized Territory. In particular, I strongly suggest you work to ensure a *balanced* approach to evaluation of where wind power is to be sited in Maine, including careful consideration of the coast and coastal islands, many of which are now in public ownership.

I appreciate that achieving this balance is no easy task, one that will require time and effort. The alternative I find unacceptable, however – that is, to *not* recognize that the decisions you reach now will permanently impact the character of the Unorganized Territory, and to *not* make the commitment to proceed with utmost care and due diligence.

I thank you and your colleagues for undertaking this most important task on behalf of all Maine people, and wish you every success in your efforts. If I may be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Richard Barringer
Research Professor
Muskie School of Public Service

Cc: Members, Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place
Karin Tilberg, Office of the Governor

¹ Sam Merrill, "Putting Wind Power in Place," Maine Sunday Telegram, Insight Section, Portland ME, January 6, 2008.

² Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, People, Place, and Prosperity, Augusta ME, December 4, 2008

³ Maine Center for Business and Economic Research et al., Maine's Technology Sectors and Clusters: Status and Strategy, University of Southern Maine, Portland ME, forthcoming.